



February 27, 2023
Emily McEvoy
Political Organizer, NBRJC

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Horn, and members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

My name is Emily McEvoy. I am a resident of Middletown and a Board Member and Political Organizer with the New Britain Racial Justice Coalition (NBRJC). The NBRJC is a grassroots organization based in New Britain, Connecticut. Our membership is composed of roughly 75 working-class people from the greater New Britain area who want to organize for racial and economic justice, and do so through mutual aid, political education, and community action. We belong to Recovery For All – a statewide coalition fighting for a better future for Connecticut, bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations.

I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5673: An Act Concerning The Reformation Of Certain Taxes And Tax Equity. As the wealthiest state in the country, Connecticut should be a shining example for the nation where every family has what we need to live a good life. But instead we have a state where hundreds of thousands of working people are struggling to raise families, even while a handful of wealthy corporations and wealthy residents are getting even wealthier. The scale of this crisis demands a bold response—people are suffering and our state has a responsibility, and has the resources to enact policies that provide for Connecticut families.

In New Britain, the NBRJC uses our mutual aid programs to meet gaps where the high cost of living has decimated our community, from providing school supplies and uniforms to hundreds of local families in summer 2022 to providing commissary grants for incarcerated community members annually. [As of 2022](#), working people in Connecticut contribute more than 25% of their annual income in state and local taxes, whereas billionaires and multimillionaires contribute merely 6%. We see clearly the effects of this high tax burden on working families when they can more reliably access toiletries, school supplies, and household items, all of which now generate even more sales tax revenue due to inflation, at our weekly events in Willow Street Park in the summer than at the store. In a state with 12 people worth \$75 billion and much more concentrated wealth along our coast, the level of need in cities like ours is simply inhumane. This bill is a first step at making sure our kids can get to school fed and ready to learn, to contribute to our state for future generations.

Without greater aid to cities coming from progressive taxes, residents will see their property taxes rise. New Britain already has the fourth highest mill rate in the state (behind other cities with large low-income populations), which deters working-class first time homebuyers from making the city their home. This bill will be a long-term investment in our cities, which they desperately need.

On a personal note, as a former food service worker and server, I strongly support the measure to hire 45 additional wage enforcement officers at the Department of Labor to investigate wage theft and assess penalties and fees where appropriate. Restaurant owners often walk a fine line with wage theft when they unaccountably withhold tips and require excessive side work from servers paid subminimum wage. I



would encourage the committee to look at the [open wage and hour investigations being conducted by Hayber, McKenna, & Dinsmore LLC](#) (you can read more by clicking the links by industry), which demonstrate the breadth of the issue and the need for these additional officers.

Please pass House Bill 5673 to make our tax structure more just and invest in the future of working families. Thank you.

Emily McEvoy
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